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SUBJECT: DEMONSTRATORS TAKE TO THE STREETS IN CONAKRY

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Following a spontaneous demonstration that started around 12:30 AM last night, there have been several similar demonstrations throughout the capital city this morning. Demonstrators are reportedly protesting the GoG's failure to lower the price of fuel as expected (see septel). Police and gendarmes have been responding to trouble areas, using tear gas and firing into the air to disperse crowds. As of 11:00 AM, security forces had not yet been able to successfully control all of the demonstration points. Embassy convened an EAC (see septel), and continues to monitor the situation. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) During the night of November 2 between 12:30am and 1:30am, isolated protests broke out along several main routes in Conakry. Sources said that the demonstrators were protesting gas prices (see septel), but recent action by the Governor of Conakry to "clean up the city" by removing merchants' street stands at intersections also exacerbated the situation. According to contacts, a "large number" of demonstrators barricaded the road with rocks and burning tires at several points in between major intersections at Bambeto Circle and Hamdallaye Circle, a predominantly Peuhl neighborhood. RSO staff reported that between 50 and 60 police dispersed protestors at Bambeto Circle by firing into the air and using tear gas. Police then deployed smaller groups of officers at many key intersections and patrolled main routes during the night.

¶3. The Governor of Conakry, who was just appointed to his position a few weeks ago, was heard on national radio the evening of November 2, advising parents to keep their children home from school on Monday due to rumors of possible protests related to fuel prices. The Director of the American School decided to close in accordance with the governor's message. Embassy parents independently decided to keep children attending the French school and a private pre-school home as well, although those schools reportedly opened on schedule.

¶4. (SBU) Embassy staff reported seeing debris between Bellevue Circle and Bambeto Circle, and along the cross-town road from the airport to Bambeto Circle this morning. Almost no taxis were on the roads, and several sources reported heavy pedestrian traffic, especially at major intersections.

¶5. (SBU) This morning, demonstrations started flaring up again around 7:30 AM, with reports of road blocks, rock throwing, and tire burning in several different neighborhoods. Police forces intervened in some areas to restore order, using tear gas and firing guns into the air, although the police did not cover all of the protests. According to a military liaison, military officers had gathered at Camp Samory Toure (located in downtown Conakry) to organize a response. Contact reported that no one could reach the Director General of the Police, prompting the military to send out gendarmes to control the crowds. By 10:30 AM, there were reports of gendarmes deployed to several trouble areas. Police and gendarmes dispersed the crowds in

key locations, using tear gas, but continued to restrict traffic flow.

¶6. (SBU) An Embassy vehicle was damaged when a protestor threw a rock and cracked the rear window. The vehicle was transporting a TDY officer from a downtown hotel location to the Embassy.

¶7. (SBU) As of 13:00, Embassy continued to receive reports indicating that police and gendarmes were responding to trouble areas, although demonstrations were still not under control.

¶8. (SBU) COMMENT. The Embassy convened an EAC at 9:30 to discuss the situation (reported septel) and will reconvene at 15:30, or earlier if necessary. END COMMENT.
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